

Downtown traffic solution moves closer to reality

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The first phase of work to improve the downtown State Route 12/26 intersection began last week.

George Reed, Inc. General Engineering Contractors received a \$64,000 contract for the first phase of the \$1.2 million project. The initial phase centers on pedestrian access and accessibility improvements with curb ramp installation on the north side of the intersection.

The bottleneck at the downtown Valley Springs intersection is expected to be a thing of the past by the fall of 2013 when the second phase of work is completed.

The second phase includes right-of-way acquisition, final design and construction.

The project consists of a free right turn lane from northbound SR 26 onto eastbound SR 12/26 and a left turn lane from westbound SR12 to SR 26.

The improvement plan was one of three alternatives presented to the public in meetings over the past few years.

Preliminary budget costs for the improvements have been pegged at \$1.2 million, much less than estimates of \$4.1 million for a traffic signal and \$2.5 million for a roundabout at the intersection.

The public expressed concern about the cost and impact on buildings and parking spaces in the downtown if plans for a traffic signal or a roundabout were pursued.

The Valley Springs intersection improvement proposal calls for a 90 percent reimbursement from the federal government with a 10 percent match coming from the county's Road Improvement Mitigation account.